

PASSPORT To Health

Provider Newsletter

April-June 2002

Keeping Providers In-

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Keeping Providers Informed
1-800-480-6823

Great Start for Pregnant Women

American Legacy Foundation's "Great Start" is the first national media campaign ever launched in the United States to reduce smoking during pregnancy. Quitting smoking is one of the most important actions a woman can take to improve the outcome of her pregnancy. Smoking during pregnancy continues to threaten the health of mothers and babies across the nation. It is estimated that more than 426,000 women smoke during pregnancy each year in America.

Many women quit smoking before getting pregnant, but as many as 22% continue to smoke during their pregnancy. This may be a result of inadequate outreach to pregnant women to inform them about the health risks of smoking as well as the limited number of smoking cessation programs designed specifically to meet the needs of pregnant smokers. Great Start will help meet both of these needs.

The goals of Great Start are to:

- Increase awareness of risks of smoking during pregnancy;
- Increase quit attempts before, during, and after pregnancy;
- Increase provider willingness to refer pregnant women to cessation services; and,
- Support pregnant women in their cessation efforts.

The Great Start effort is composed of a Quitline, a television ad campaign, and consumer education materials. In partnership with the American Cancer Society, Legacy will sponsor for a minimum of one year a nationwide toll-free Quitline providing cessation counseling for pregnant smokers. The toll-free number for the Quitline is 1-866-66-START (1-888-677-8278).

Callers to the Quitline will have the

opportunity to receive free confidential telephone counseling sessions with a trained counselor who will help them manage their attempt to quit. Women who call the Quitline will be provided with an educational booklet that complements the telephone counseling sessions. In addition, pregnant smokers who complete a portion of the telephone counseling sessions will receive a video on pregnancy and smoking cessation.

American Legacy Foundation encourages medical providers to use the following evidence-based counseling method to help pregnant patients stop smoking:

Ask your patient about her smoking status;
Advise her in a clear, strong and personalized manner about the risks of smoking and the benefits of quitting for herself and her fetus;
Assess her willingness to make a quit attempt within the next thirty days;
Assist her with ways to quit by: suggesting problem-solving methods and skills for quitting, providing support as part of the treatment, helping her arrange support among family and co-workers, and providing pregnancy-specific self-help cessation materials;
Arrange follow-up contacts with her to assess smoking status, encourage smoking cessation if she continues to smoke, and refer her to more intensive help if needed.

Unfortunately the issue of women and smoking goes far beyond pregnant smokers. In 1997 approximately 165,000 women died from smoking related diseases. An additional 510,000 women between 1998 and 2000 are suspected to have died from tobacco use.



For more information about the American Legacy Foundation's Great Start Program, contact

Families need to be educated on what preventive healthcare is and why it is important.

PASSPORT Well Child Phone Interviews

Currently, 62% of children on Medicaid in Montana have had at least one preventive Well Child Check Up. Because children on Medicaid in Montana are not receiving the preventive healthcare services at the rate the State of Montana would like, the Department of Public Health and Human Services (DPHHS) has set a goal to increase the rate to 80% within five years. To determine reasons for and possible solutions to increase the number of children on Medicaid receiving preventive Well Child Check Ups, Montana Health Choices (MHC) conducted telephone interviews with families who have children on Medicaid PASSPORT.

Forty-three families on Medicaid PASSPORT participated in the phone interviews representing towns and cities across the state of Montana. Of the 43 families, 12 were Native American families living on six of the reservations in Montana, with two families from each of the six reservations completing the interview. The families were asked seven questions relating to their children's healthcare.

The questions asked were chosen to help provide DPHHS with an understanding of problems that may exist in receiving preventive healthcare for children on Montana Medicaid.

MHC asked why parents take their children to their medical provider, and do they take them specifically for Well Child Check Ups. Illness

was the reason most parents gave for taking their child to the provider's office. When asked if they knew what preventive healthcare services were covered by Medicaid, most of the parents knew that preventive healthcare exists and that it is important, they just couldn't say why it is important or what a basic Well Child Check Up consists of.

Parents were also asked about transportation, whether or not they have reliable transportation and if transportation is an issue when scheduling or going to a medical appointment. Slightly more than half of the parents said that they have reliable transportation and that it is not an issue when taking their child in for a medical appointment. Almost half of the parents have to rely on public transportation or another person to take their family to the provider's office.

MHC also asked parents to tell about their experience in receiving healthcare through the Medicaid Program. Most of the parents felt that their experience has been positive and they were happy with the healthcare they have been receiving. Most parents trust their child's provider and are pleased with the care they receive, from both the office staff and the providers themselves.

To increase the rate of Well Child Check Ups, families need to be educated on what preventive

PASSPORT Updates and Reminders

- **PASSPORT Provider Survey**

You will be receiving a Medicaid PASSPORT Provider Survey at the end of March 2002. Each PASSPORT contract will receive a survey. These surveys are very important to gauge the success of the PASSPORT Program and to identify where improvements need to be made. We appreciate your cooperation in filling out the survey and returning it to our office. If you have any questions regarding the survey, please contact Maria Rogne or Jeanie Thiel at MHC Provider Helpline at 1-800-480-6823. Thanks in advance for your help!

- **Important Changes to Co-Payments will be Implemented April 1, 2002**

A notice was sent to all Montana Medicaid providers regarding the changes. If you have questions please call ACS Provider Relations at 1-800-624-3958 (406-442-1837 for Helena or out-of-state callers).

- **Upcoming Changes to 24-Hour Coverage**

The Department of Public Health and Humans Services is developing a new policy to guide providers on providing 24-Hour Coverage to their clients. Look for this information soon.

Disenrolling a PASSPORT Client

There are certain situations in which it is appropriate to request a Medicaid PASSPORT client be removed or disenrolled from your Medicaid PASSPORT caseload. Page 52 of the PASSPORT To Health Provider Guide outlines the acceptable situations:

- The provider-patient relationship is mutually unacceptable.
- The client fails to follow prescribed medical treatment.
- The client is abusive.
- Due to the client's condition or illness, they could be better treated by a different type of provider.

The PCP must request removal of a client by notifying Montana Health Choices

and the client in writing. Montana Health Choices will assist the client in selecting a new PCP. The PASSPORT provider must continue to provide patient management services during the disenrollment process. Only in extreme circumstances will an exception be made to this rule. During this time the PASSPORT provider may continue to treat the client or refer to another provider. The disenrollment process will take approximately 30 days. Montana Health Choices will not allow the client to re-enroll with a PCP who has previously dismissed them.

Montana Health Choices will not disenroll a client from a PCP unless the provider sends written notification. If you have questions, please call the MHC Provider Helpline at

Positive Comments

Congratulations to the providers below who received raves from their Medicaid PASSPORT clients and Montana Health Choices!



- “I haven't had a bad experience (in receiving healthcare), **Dr. Fred Gunville** has been really good to the children.”
- “The doctor at **Mission Mountain Medicine** is very good with my son and the staff has been good too.”
- “My doctor is wonderful. This program is great, my workers Karen and Stacy have been wonderful too! Your program and your workers make me feel like a responsible parent, you don't unnecessarily mother me like some programs. Thank you.”

MHC would like to thank **Dr. Aaron Billin** of the Hardin Clinic for following and enforcing PASSPORT regulations and policies. Providers like Dr. Billin help make the PASSPORT To Health Program a success!



In the Spotlight: Dr. James Feist

This quarter, MHC is featuring Dr. James Feist, a valued member of Montana's Peer Educational Review Committee (PERC).

The PERC committee is a six member panel of PASSPORT providers who help develop and decide policy and clinical issues for Medicaid's PASSPORT To Health Program.

Dr. Feist was born in Edgeley, ND in 1948. He received a Bachelor of Science in Biology from Carroll College in 1970. From 1970-1972 he attended

UND Medical School in Grand Forks, ND and in 1974 he received his Medical Doctorate from the University of Wisconsin in Madison, WI. He received his residency training at the University of Iowa Hospitals, Pediatrics from 1974-1977.

Dr. Feist lives in Bozeman with his wife and three children. He has been practicing pediatric medicine at Medical Associates in Bozeman since 1977.

Dr. Feist has participated in many professional as well as

scientific activities in the Bozeman community. He is currently a medical advisor for the Gallatin County Health Department. He also is on the Board of Directors for Bozeman Deaconess Health Services, as well as the Physician Advisory Board for Blue Cross Blue Shield.

We appreciate Dr. Feist's time and efforts in treating and improving the healthcare of Montanans. His active role in healthcare is a benefit to his community as well as the State

Meet Dr. James Feist, a valued Montana Pediatrician!

Montana watching for West Nile Virus

Four Montana state agencies are combining their expertise this spring to begin monitoring for West Nile Virus, a disease that affects birds and horses much more severely than humans.

West Nile Virus is an exotic African virus that was introduced into New York City in 1999. The disease has gradually spread westward into 27 states, as far as Iowa and Missouri. The virus is spread through mosquitoes and has killed hundreds of thousands of crows and other wild birds, significantly fewer horses and 16 humans in the U.S.

The Department of Public Health and Human Services (DPHHS) is working with the state departments of Livestock; Fish, Wildlife and Parks; and Agriculture to begin disease surveillance and mosquito abatement. West Nile Virus has not been identified in Montana,

but state health officials suspect its entry is imminent.

"The virus is spreading farther and faster than anticipated," said Dr. Todd Damrow, state epidemiologist for DPHHS. "I expect it to surface here probably within the year and then continue to spread throughout the continental U.S. within the coming few years."

Most people infected with West Nile Virus do not become ill in any way, and the majority of those who do develop illness show only mild symptoms, such as fever and headache. "Only a fraction of people who become infected even know it," Damrow said, yet he cautioned that in the most severe cases the virus can cause encephalitis (inflammation of the brain) and death.

The virus will likely enter Montana by infected birds as they migrate north in the spring.

"Montana birds wintering down South are mingling with infected birds, and may carry the virus back to Montana," said Dr. Keith Aune, FWP wildlife disease expert.

In preparing for the disease, state health officials are enhancing surveillance by increasing physician's awareness of human cases. Also, health workers will be systematically collecting mosquitoes statewide to test for the presence of the virus. Livestock veterinary pathologists will analyze equine specimens for evidence of infection. Additionally, wildlife biologists and FWP game wardens will watch for dead birds, particularly crows and magpies, and then test them for viral infection.

For more information on West Nile Virus, contact Todd Damrow, PH.D., M.P.H.

State officials want physicians to be aware of human cases.

Wal-Mart Walkers

In partnership with the Helena Wal-Mart, the Montana Cardiovascular Health Program started a "Wal-Mart Walkers" pilot program to promote physical activity with seniors who live in the Helena area.

For a 10-week period running January 7 through March 15, residents age 50 or older are encouraged to walk laps in the Helena Wal-Mart by following a designated route. The project is focusing on walking between 7 a.m. and 10 a.m. Monday through Friday.

Participants may become eligible to win prizes based on the number of laps they walk; the grand prize is a treadmill. Other prizes include fitness videos, exercise mats, hand weights, and pedometers.

If the walking program is successful, it may expand to other Montana Wal-Mart stores.

For more information about the walking program or if you're interested in starting a walking program at your local Wal-Mart, contact Lynda Blades, Montana Cardiovascular Health Program, Department of Public Health and Human Services, at 406-444-7324. You may also contact your local Wal-Mart manager.

